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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the persons and factors that influence the career decisions of high school vocational students. A closed-form questionnaire was administered to all senior students in 43 Louisiana high schools (n=3,858). Findings indicated that parents influenced the students' career choices more than any other persons, with the mother being more influential than the father. Vocational teachers were more influential than the counselor concerning career decisions. Too many parents, teachers, and counselors appeared to be encouraging students to go to college. Leading factors for seniors in selecting a career were interest in the work, working conditions, salary/wages, and personal satisfaction. The differences in responses among the students who were categorized according to vocational program experience indicated that a uniqueness exists in the career decision-making patterns of vocational students. Little relationship, if any, or a low positive relationship existed between years in a specific vocational program and whether that vocational teacher had an effect on the student's career decisions. Low to moderate positive relationships existed between years in a specific vocational program and whether that program had an effect on the student's career decisions. (References and data tables are appended.) (YLB)

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CAREER DECISION PATTERNS OF SENIORS WHO HAVE TAKEN VOCATIONAL COURSES

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CAREER DECISION PATTERNS OF SENIORS WHO HAVE TAKEN VOCATIONAL COURSES

Related Literature

The direct or indirect focus of career decision making and the forces which have an impact upon those decisions can be found in many works by theorists and researchers. Economic, social, environmental, ideological, and scientific conditions have been explored. Vocational educators have considered decision making, career development and counseling, and vocational guidance as an integral part of their employment responsibility.

Trait-Factor Theory

In the early 1900's, Frank Parsons wrote about choosing a vocation and outlined the process of vocational guidance. His theory, an early version of trait and factor theory, was based on self understanding, whole knowledge of careers, and the true reasoning of the relationships between self and career decision making (Parsons, 1909). This well-articulated theory of occupational choice is one of the most durable ones. Trait and factor theory was derived from the psychology of individual differences and has been developed further by theorists such as E. G. Williamson and A. J. Jones (Isaacson, 1986).

Need-Drive Theory

Roe and Hoppock have been among the leading proponents of the need-drive theories which focus on choosing an occupation, the factors influencing the choice, and the adequacy of the choice as measured by satisfaction of need, success, or personal adjustment (Hoppock, 1976; Roe, 1956). Hoppock considered the sociological factors as being important in student determination of vocational opportunities which are socially acceptable and available, and that occupations are chosen to meet needs. Roe's theory considered personalities, different climates of the early parent-child relations and the development of the individual's need hierarchy: family and experiences.

Developmental Theorists

Among the developmental theorists are found Ginzberg, Tiedeman and O'Hara, Holland, and Super (Isaacson, 1986). Ginzberg considered such concept factors as reality testing experiences, the identification with suitable role models, and whether the individual is work- or pleasure-oriented (Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Axelrod & Herman, 1951a, 1951b; Ginzberg, 1971). Tiedman and O'Hara maintained career development includes the differentiation and integration within the psychosocial processes of ego-identity; thus, the critical components include situational, social and biological which are internalized with self in sequenced events (O'Hara and Tiedeman, 1959). Holland views career choices as extensions of individual personality and the personal behavior styles implemented in the context of that chosen for a person's life work (Osipow, 1973). Super, thought to have been heavily influenced by writings of Carl Rogers, Carter, and Bordin in self-concept theory and Buehler's writings in developmental psychology, fused his theory to focus on implementation of the self-concept by entering a chosen occupation seen to allow him/her the greatest opportunity for self expression. People differ in their abilities, interests, and personalities and thus, vocational decisions made or attempted during adolescence may differ with those made in later years (Super, 1953).

Social Learning Theory

Krumboltz's (1976) social learning theory has a focus on four major categories of influencers upon individual occupational decision making: genetics, environment, experiences, and interactions.

Influencing Factors on Choice

Theorists and researchers are in agreement with the concept that work is important. The choices made for careers are important. Counselors, educators

and families need to be aware of different patterns and influencers for improved decision making and career guidance.

The demographics of ethnic, racial, personal characteristics, family affiliation, education, and aspiration are among factors found in studies which relate to career decision making. Interest, psychological, sociological and environmental factors have also been studied.

Several studies during the 1960's and 1970's (Vetter, 1960; Eaddy, 1968; Mondart, Curtis & Dobbins, 1970; Lungstrom, 1973; Lisack, 1975) determined factors influencing career/occupational choice of students. Among the findings noted: Vocational teachers are often more effective than the school counselor in the area of career guidance and parents are important influencers in career decision making. Teachers influence, and to a lesser extent, counselors, career decisions of students (Kendale and Miller, 1983; Mills, 1980; Hillison & Hagee, 1981; Schwartz, 1982; Young and Johnson, 1986). Lungstrom (1973) found counselors to be least helpful of all persons. In recent years, research has found parents, especially mothers, to be strong influencers (Birk and Blimline, 1984; Falk, 1980; June and Fooks, 1980; Mills, 1980; Schergens, 1980). Also influential in occupational choices made by young people are their peers and siblings (Mondart, Curtis, & Dobbins, 1970; Lungstrum, 1973; Penn and Gabriel, 1976; Schwartz, 1982; Veres and Carmichael, 1981). Lisack (1975) found interest in the job to be influential in the career choices of students. Mangieri and Kemper (1984) found implications that prestige and recognition, working conditions, friends or relatives who were teachers and cost of education were not important factors to those expressing high interest in teaching. Johnson (1987) used the Krumboltz social learning theory to test hypotheses regarding the importance of various factors on the decisions of students to enroll in a food-service-related course. The most influential

factors were interests and persons close to the students. Falk (1980) studied "significant others" -self, parents, relatives or friends, guidance counselors, teachers and administrators - and found family to have the most significant effect.

McCracken, Barrick, & Beard (1984) studied the relationship between the family farm situation and the occupational goals of the students, reasons for enrolling in vocational agriculture, and future aspirations. No differences existed between male and female students in the proportion from full-time farms, part-time farms, and those who were not from farms; no difference existed by occupational goals, reasons for their decisions to enroll, and their plans following graduation. Peterson (1983) studied the social placement of adolescents, and results showed family decisions favor career goals of adolescent males over adolescent females. Lungstrum (1973) found that in industrial education programs, male students were more independent of peer influence. Occupations of fathers were related to the son's occupational choice, but mother's occupation did not seem to be related to daughter's career choices. Dekutoski (1984) found community size and type affected career choices.

Career Roles and Aspirations

Thompson's (1983) findings suggest that vocational, technical and non-college-bound students should have different educational orientations and career interests. McNulty (1983) found that reasons for occupational choices varied across grade levels. Mondart, Curtis & Dobbins (1979) found that Louisiana students developed occupational aspirations at an early age, at the tenth grade level or below. As a rule, students lacked knowledge of the occupation. In addition, Monart et al. stated that:

> Both the school and home encourage students to attain a high education level; about one-third of the students expect to attend college for four years; another one-third expect to enter some kind of a post high school program for vocational training; and the remaining one-third consider ending their formal education with the high school (pp. 51-52).

Traditional stereotypical roles, due in part or in the main to heritage related, cultural, and economic influences in the state, have dominated the decisions of Louisiana students. Tittle (1981) found women tended to make career choices based on past experiences or expectations. High school students indicated personal values affected the decision of occupational choice, the decision to marry, and the decision to become a parent. Nelms (1982) investigated the impact of socioeconomic status on job choice and did not find any significance there.

Theoretical Frame of This Study

Sufficient change had occurred over the last two to three decades to warrant additional investigation to reaffirm or determine other factors influencing career decisions (Kotrlik & Harrison, 1986). Little attention has been paid to the career development and decision patterns of secondary vocational education students in recent years. Inquiry, in general and for Louisiana in particular, was needed regarding patterns of (1) students in specific vocational programs, (2) those having had no vocational courses, (3) those having few vocational courses, and (4) those having had many courses. The relation of time spent in courses to program and teacher impacts on career decisions was also a needed inquiry. This study was based theoretically on the concept that career decision making patterns can be determined, and that students were a valid source of information regarding those patterns.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to determine the persons and factors that influence the career decisions of high school vocational students. The objectives were:

1. Determine which persons influence the career decisions of Louisiana high school seniors who have taken vocational education courses.

2. Determine the factors that influence the career decisions of Louisiana high school seniors who have taken vocational education courses.

3. Determine what parents, teachers and guidance counselors encourage Louisiana high school seniors who have taken vocational education to do after leaving high school.

4. Determine if the responses regarding the persons and factors that have influenced the career decisions of Louisiana high school seniors who have taken vocational education are distributed independently of vocational program experience.

5. Determine if a relationship exists between years in each vocational education program and whether students perceive that the vocational program or the vocational teacher have an effect on the student' career decisions. The vocational programs included in this analysis were agriculture, business and office, home economics, and industrial arts.

Research Procedure

A closed-form questionnaire was developed based on an extensive computer based and manual review of the literature. The instrument was examined for content validity by a state supervisor of guidance programs, two professors who teach vocational guidance courses, 12 graduate students in a vocational guidance course, three school principals, and eight school counselors. These persons indicated that the instrument had content validity.

The instrument was field tested with 243 senior students in three high schools of varied size, course offerings, geographic location and socioeconomic status. The field test was conducted with a large number of students so that realistic instrument administration procedures could be simulated. The field test revealed that the instrument was valid and reliable. Only minor revisions were necessary. Reliability estimates were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The estimates for the two scales in the instrument were .87 and .88.

The population consisted of all senior students in Louisiana's public high schools. The sample consisted of all senior students in 43 Louisiana high schools. The sampling procedure used was a cluster sample within a stratified (by 5 school sizes and 3 culturally diverse geographic areas) random sample with replacement (Snedecor & Cochran, 1980). The frame for the study was taken from the Louisiana School Directory 1985-1986 (1985) which is the official listing of educational institutions in Louisiana.

The purpose for using this design was so that identified subgroups (by school size and area of state) within the population would be represented in the sample in the same proportion that they existed in the population. This plan allowed for accurate estimates of each stratum and much more accurate estimates of the total population. The largest sampling error anticipated in any cell was less than one percent.

A total of 3,858 students who were in attendance on the day of data collection were surveyed from an estimated population of 45,000. The large number of students surveyed was due primarily to the cluster sampling included in the research design and to data collection constraints placed on research conducted by organizations external to the local school systems. The sampling design allowed the researchers to ensure that all data were collected in a manner that insured the integrity of the data.

All data were collected on-site during April, 1986. Packets with pencils, instruments, answer sheets, and instructions for each group monitor or homeroom teacher were distributed by the project staff. The instrument was administered during the homeroom period or during a morning activity period. The instrument took 20-25 minutes to complete.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data pertaining to objectives 1, 2, and 3. The data pertaining to objective 4 were analyzed using chi-square tests of independence. Spearman rho correlation coefficients were used to determine if a relationship existed between years in a vocational program and whether the program or teacher had an effect on the student' career decisions (objective 5). The set of descriptors suggested by Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1979) was used for interpretation of the correlation coefficients. The alpha level was preset at .005 to lessen the experiment-wise error resulting from a large number of chi-square tests and because of the large sample size.

Findings

Persons Affecting Career Decisions

The students were asked to indicate if selected persons influenced their career decisions by marking either "yes" or "no" (Objective 1). The persons and the percentage of students who responded "yes" about each person are presented in Table 1. The data show that the persons who received the most "yes" responses were the mother, father, person in the occupation, and friend, in that order.

The chi-square test of independence was used to determine if the responses were distributed independently of the students experience with vocational education (objective 4). The seven groups used for these analyses were: (1) Students who had taken three or more years of one vocational subject

(agriculture, business, home economics, or industrial arts - this was four of the groups); (2) Students who had taken three or more years for each of two or more vocational subjects (Note: Most of the marketing and distributive education students were in this group, therefore, a separate group was not used for them); (3) Students who had taken vocational subjects but had not taken any one subject for three or more years; and, (4) Non-vocational students (Note: These students who had not taken any vocational course). Eleven of the 17 analyses resulted in significant chi-square values (Table 1).

As expected, students were more likely to indicate that the vocational teachers influenced their career decisions if they had taken three or more years of the respective vocational course. Vocational agriculture and industrial arts students were more likely to indicate that the military recruiter influenced their decisions. Home economics students, vocational agriculture students, and students who had taken two or more vocational courses for three or more years were more likely to indicate that their relatives influenced their career decisions. Home economics students were more likely to indicate that other teachers and counselors influenced their decisions. These and other related findings may be seen in Table 2.

Table 3 displays the rank of persons who influenced the career decisons of the students by group.

Factors Important in Selecting a Career

The students were asked to indicate if selected factors were important to them in selecting a career by marking either "yes" or "no" (Objective 2). The percentages of students who responded "yes" to each factor are presented in Table 4. As the data indicate, the factors that received the most "yes" responses were "interest in this work," "working conditions," "personal satisfaction," and "salary or wages."

The chi-square test of independence was used to determine if the responses were distributed independently of the students experience with vocational education (objective 4). The groupings used for these analyses were the same as the groups used for the previous analyses. Fourteen of the 20 analyses resulted in significant chi-square values (Table 5).

The distribution of responses differed for three of the top four factors: "interest in this work," "working conditions," and "personal satisfaction." More business and home economics students indicated that these factors were of importance to them than for the other groups. Generally, students who had taken one or more vocational courses for three or more years were more likely to indicate that the factors which yielded significant chi-square values were important as compared with a lower values for non-vocational students and students who had taken lesser amounts of vocational education. These and other related findings may be seen in Table 5.

Table 6 displays the ranks of factors that influenced the career decisons of the students by group.

What Students Had Been Encouraged To Do After High School

When asked what selected persons had encouraged them to do after high school, 67% indicated parents, 82% indicated teachers, and 79% indicated counselors encouraged them to "go to college" (Objective 3). The remaining responses were in the categories of "attend vocational-technical school," "work full time," "go to the military," or "drop out of school." These data are presented in Table 7.

Relationships Between Years in Program and Students' Perception of Teacher and Program Effect on Career Decisions

Spearman's rho correlations were used to determine if a relationship existed between whether a student indicated that the vocational teacher had

affected the students' career decisions and the number of years that the student had been enrolled in that vocational course (Objective 5). The highest correlation existed between the vocational agriculture teacher and years enrolled in vocational agriculture. A value of rho = .54 indicated that a moderate positive relationship existed. Students were more likely to indicate that vocational agriculture teachers influenced their career decisions as the number of years enrolled in vocational agriculture increased. This was also true at a low level for the other vocational teachers. These data are shown in Table 8.

Spearman's rho correlations were also used to determine if a relationship existed between whether a student indicated that the vocational program had affected the students' career decisions and the number of years that the student had been enrolled in that vocational course (Objective 5). The highest correlation existed between the vocational agriculture and industrial arts programs and the number of years enrolled in those programs. A value of rho = .33 indicated that a low positive relationship existed. Students were more likely to indicate that the vocational agriculture and industrial arts programs influenced their career decisions as the number of years enrolled in vocational agriculture or industrial arts increased. Statistically significant correlations also existed for the other two vocational programs, which indicated that the correlation was not equal to zero. However, the rho values indicated that little if any practical correlation existed. These data are presented in Table 8.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Parents influenced the students' career choices more than any other persons, with the mother being more influential than the father. This finding supports earlier research in this area. State staff and teacher educators

should encourage vocational teachers, counselors and other teachers to consider this factor when working with current students and when recruiting prospective students.

2. Vocational teachers are more influential with their students than the counselor concerning career decisions. Teacher educators and state supervisors should make this fact known to vocational teachers, and teacher educators should take this fact into consideration when planning recruitment programs. In addition, vocational teachers should recognize counselors as being influential with these students and with other students in the school. Strong support and cooperative efforts between vocational teachers and the guidance counselor are warranted.

3. It appears that too many parents, teachers and counselors may be encouraging students to go to college. Over 65% of the students perceived that they were being encouraged to go to college by parents, teachers or counselors. Standardized test statistics, job availability for college graduates and other factors indicate that this percentage may be unrealistic. This information should be shared with principals, counselors and the news media in an attempt to alleviate this situation.

4. Interest in the work, working conditions, salary/wages, and personal satisfaction are the leading factors for seniors in selecting a career. The students' responses to these factors, and to the other leading factors, should be given strong consideration by vocational teachers in planning and implementing their curriculum.

5. The differences in responses among the students who were categorized according to vocational program experience indicate that a uniqueness exists in the career decision making patterns of vocational students. High school teachers, counselors and administrators should further examine how different

students make their career decisions and, if needed, modify the career guidance program and the career decision making phase of individual vocational programs accordingly.

6. Little, if any, or low positive relationships existed between years in a specific vocational program and whether that vocational teacher had an effect on the student' career decisions. Low to moderate positive relationships existed between years in a specific vocational program and whether that vocational program had an effect on the student' career decisions. Since one goal of vocational programs is to assist students in their career decisions, additional research should be conducted to validate this finding and, if this finding is true, state supervisors, teacher educators, and vocational teachers should immediately undertake efforts to address this issue.

Educational and Scientific Implications

Vocational educators need to be aware of how students perceive influences on their career decisions so they can help provide the best guidance and information possible for making optimal career choices. Based on the results of this study, it appears that vocational students do not perceive that their vocational teachers or the vocational program is very influential in their career decision making process. Additional research should be conducted to document the influence of vocational programs and teachers on the career decision making patterns of vocational students. If the programs and teachers are of minimal to moderate influence, this needs to be considered in planning teacher in-service and in planning and implementing programmatic change.

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Table 1

Persons Influencing the Career Decisions of Seniors (n = 3,858)

Person	Responded "Yes"	
	#	%
Mother	2,488	69.4
Father	2,196	59.0
Person in the occupation	2,053	54.7
Friend	2,046	54.5
Grandparent, aunt, uncle or other relative	1,674	44.5
Brother or sister	1,409	37.6
Other teachers	1,384	37.0
Guidance counselor	1,080	28.8
Military recruiter	719	19.2
Business and office occupations teacher	941	25.1
Coach	567	15.1
Principal	488	13.0
Industrial arts teacher	488	13.0
Pastor, priest, rabbi or other clergy	472	12.6
Home Economics Teacher	444	11.9
Marketing and distributive education teacher	442	11.8
Vocational agriculture teacher	397	10.6

Note. All students did not have the opportunity to know all vocational teachers, and some schools did not have all programs.

Table 2

Persons Influencing the Career Decisions of Seniors (n = 3,858)

	Percent responding "yes"							
Group:	AGRI	BUS	HEC	IND	OTH ADV	OTH VOC	NON-VOC	Chi-square
Person n:	250	330	619	228	248	1931	252	
Mother	67.8	69.4	77.0	67.0	71.4	68.9	63.9	13.2
Father	65.3	56.4	56.2	67.6	63.6	58.5	55.8	16.5
Person in the occupation	54.3	57.2	55.0	59.9	58.2	53.8	46.9	11.7
Friend	52.7	52.7	63.3	51.6	58.2	53.7	53.9	13.9
Grandparent, aunt, uncle or other relative	48.4	40.0	55.0	45.6	50.6	43.7	37.2	30.6*
Brother or sister	41.3	36.0	44.0	39.4	37.8	36.8	33.5	10.4
Other teachers	27.2	35.2	43.4	34.9	32.6	38.4	38.6	79.6*
Guidance counselor	24.2	27.4	37.3	31.0	30.5	28.7	22.8	19.7*
Military recruiter	25.0	10.3	19.1	31.9	20.8	19.6	19.9	59.6*
Business and office occupations teacher	13.1	46.9	28.7	16.1	41.1	19.6	12.9	54.7*
Coach	21.9	9.1	16.3	17.5	19.6	15.0	16.5	30.9*
Principal	16.0	8.6	17.5	12.4	19.7	12.5	13.1	27.8*
Industrial arts teacher	9.9	5.9	12.1	44.2	21.2	11.9	8.3	234.1*
Pastor, priest, rabbi or other clergy	12.3	8.9	17.5	12.4	17.6	12.3	6.4	20.1*
Home economics teacher	11.2	5.6	38.5	9.7	25.0	10.1	5.4	192.0*
Marketing/distributive education teacher	8.6	10.6	11.7	15.6	16.9	11.9	8.8	14.4
Vocational agriculture teacher	36.9	3.0	9.8	10.2	23.3	8.9	5.0	269.5*

Note. All students did not have the opportunity to know all vocational teachers, and some schools did not have all programs. AGRI = vocational agriculture students; BUS = business and office education students; HEC = vocational home economics education students; IND = industrial arts/education students; ADV VOC = students who had taken two or more vocational courses for three or more years for each course; OTHER VOC = students who had taken one or more vocational courses for less than three years; NON VOC = students who had never taken a vocational course.

*$p < .005$

Table 3

Rankings by Group of Persons Influencing the Career Decisions of Seniors (n = 3,858)

	Ranking by Percent Responding "Yes"						
Group:	AGRI	BUS	HEC	IND	OTH ADV	OTH VOC	NON-VOC
Person n:	250	330	619	228	248	1931	252
Mother	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Father	2	3	3	1	2	2	2
Person in the occupation	3	2	5	3	3	3	4
Friend	4	4	2	4	4	4	3
Grandparent, aunt, uncle or other relative	5	6	4	5	5	5	6
Brother or sister	6	7	6	7	7	7	7
Other teachers	8	8	7	8	8	6	5
Guidance counselor	10	9	9	10	9	8	8
Military recruiter	9	11	11	9	13	10	9
Business and office occupations teacher	13	5	10	12	6	9	12
Coach	11	12	14	11	15	11	10
Principal	12	14	13	14	14	12	11
Industrial arts teacher	16	15	15	6	12	14	14
Pastor, priest, rabbi or other clergy	14	13	12	15	16	13	15
Home Economics Teacher	15	16	8	17	10	16	16
Marketing and distributive education teacher	17	10	16	13	17	15	13
Vocational agriculture teacher	7	17	17	16	11	17	17

Note. All students did not have the opportunity to know all vocational teachers, and some schools did not have all programs. AGRI = vocational agriculture students; BUS = business and office education students; HEC = vocational home economics education students; IND = industrial arts/education students; ADV VOC = students who had taken two or more vocational courses for three or more years for each course; OTHER VOC = students who had taken one or more vocational courses for less than three years; NON VOC = students who had never taken a vocational course.

Table 4

Factors Influencing the Career Decisions of Seniors (n = 3,858)

Factor	Responded "Yes"	
	#	%
Interest in this work	3,496	92.2
Working conditions	3,349	88.2
Personal satisfaction	3,322	87.3
Salary or wages	3,297	86.6
Availability of jobs	3,056	80.1
Status and reputation of occupation	2,819	74.4
Work experience	2,750	72.2
Fringe benefits	2,594	68.4
Special talents or abilities	2,557	67.1
Cost required to prepare for this career	2,409	63.5
Financial backing is available	2,352	61.8
Length of time for training	2,349	61.7
Indoor or outdoor work	2,258	59.5
Contributions to society	2,190	57.6
Geographical location	1,750	46.0
Marriage	1,561	41.1
Friends, parents or relatives working in the occupation	1,451	38.2
Insistence of parents or relatives	1,374	36.2
Family tradition	900	24.0
Inheritance of a farm or business	832	21.8

Table 5

Factors Influencing the Career Decisions of Seniors (n = 3,858)

	Percent responding "yes"							
Group:	AGRI	BUS	HEC	IND	ADV VOC	OTHER VOC	NON-VOC	Chi-square
Factor n:	250	330	619	228	248	1931	252	
Interest in this work	91.9	96.1	92.4	88.3	91.6	92.3	85.9	31.4*
Working conditions	86.7	93.3	90.0	88.3	86.3	87.6	80.2	33.1*
Salary or wages	83.4	88.0	90.0	88.7	87.9	86.1	82.3	11.8
Personal satisfaction	85.0	91.5	91.8	83.8	89.9	85.9	84.7	25.8*
Availability of jobs	77.3	83.4	86.4	74.4	80.8	79.9	72.8	26.5*
Work experience	74.6	77.1	79.7	72.4	77.0	69.7	62.2	38.2*
Status and reputation of occupation	71.7	80.9	78.7	71.2	75.3	73.2	66.7	28.4*
Indoor or outdoor work	64.2	58.5	65.7	60.0	62.6	58.7	52.4	14.5
Fringe benefits	66.4	73.9	72.2	71.5	71.1	65.9	64.8	19.8*
Length of time for training	67.9	62.0	69.8	64.4	73.0	58.3	57.4	38.4*
Cost required to prepare for this career	63.5	62.5	75.5	65.3	70.3	61.4	57.8	32.9*
Special talents or abilities	61.0	65.4	70.2	73.1	68.2	67.1	66.5	10.3
Financial backing is available	59.1	64.3	68.8	61.5	63.6	60.8	55.2	14.9
Contributions to society	51.4	58.0	60.4	55.4	58.2	58.6	52.2	9.2
Geographical location	50.2	48.1	44.8	44.1	51.7	45.1	41.4	9.3
Friends, parents or relatives working in the occupation	48.2	36.2	44.8	40.9	40.0	36.6	33.1	23.5*
Insistence of parents or relatives	44.5	30.2	43.3	33.0	43.3	36.3	28.6	36.6*
Marriage	44.1	42.0	51.2	42.5	39.3	39.4	36.0	20.4*
Inheritance of a farm or business	39.5	17.3	20.1	23.3	28.1	20.6	20.1	61.7*
Family tradition	30.6	17.3	32.1	32.4	28.0	22.8	20.6	46.0*

Note. All students did not have the opportunity to know all vocational teachers, and some schools did not have all programs. AGRI = vocational agriculture students; BUS = business and office education students; HEC = vocational home economics education students; IND = industrial arts/education students; ADV VOC = students who had taken two or more vocational courses for three or more years for each course; OTHER VOC = students who had taken one or more vocational courses for less than three years; NON VOC = students who had never taken a vocational course.

*$p < .005$

Table 6

Rankings by Group of Factors Influencing the Career Decisions of Seniors (n = 3,858)

		Ranking by Percent responding "yes"						
	Group:	AGRI	BUS	HEC	IND	ADV VOC	OTHER VOC	NON-VOC
Factor	n:	250	330	619	228	248	1931	252
Interest in this work		1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Working conditions		2	2	3	3	4	2	2
Salary or wages		4	4	4	1	3	3	4
Personal satisfaction		3	3	2	4	2	4	3
Availability of jobs		5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Work experience		6	7	6	7	6	7	6
Status and reputation of occupation		7	6	7	9	7	6	7
Indoor or outdoor work		10	13	13	13	13	12	10
Fringe benefits		9	8	9	8	9	9	9
Length of time for training		8	12	11	11	8	14	8
Cost required to prepare for this career		11	11	8	10	10	10	11
Special talents or abilities		12	9	10	6	11	8	12
Financial backing is available		13	10	12	12	12	11	13
Contributions to society		14	14	14	14	14	13	14
Geographical location		15	15	16	15	15	15	15
Friends, parents or relatives working in the occupation		16	17	17	17	17	17	16
Insistence of parents or relatives		17	18	18	18	16	18	17
Marriage		18	16	15	16	18	16	18
Inheritance of a farm or business		19	20	20	20	19	20	19
Family tradition		20	19	19	19	20	19	20

Note. All students did not have the opportunity to know all vocational teachers, and some schools did not have all programs. AGRI = vocational agriculture students; BUS = business and office education students; HEC = vocational home economics education students; IND = industrial arts/education students; ADV VOC = students who had taken two or more vocational courses for three or more years for each course; OTHER VOC = students who had taken one or more vocational courses for less than three years; NON VOC = students who had never taken a vocational course.

Table 7

What Parents, Teachers and Guidance Counselors Encouraged Students to do After High School (n = 3,858)

	Parents	Teachers	Counselors
Go to college	66.6	81.5	78.9
Go to vo-tech/trade school	13.0	8.2	9.8
Go into the military	10.0	3.6	3.8
Work full time	9.5	4.1	4.6
Drop out of school	1.0	2.7	2.9

Table 8

Relationships Between Years in Vocational Program and Whether Students Perceive that the Vocational Program or the Vocational Teacher have an Effect on the Student's Career Decisions (n = 3,858)

Program	Spearman's rho	Interpretation
Agriculture	.54*	Moderate correlation
Business and Office	.37*	Low correlation
Home economics	.43*	Low correlation
Industrial arts	.48*	Moderate correlation

Teacher	Spearman's rho	Interpretation
Vocational agriculture	.33*	Low correlation
Business and Office	.27*	Little if any correlation
Home economics	.24*	Little if any correlation
Industrial arts	.33*	Low correlation